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B.T.C. - A.P.O. 525
% Postmaster, N.Y.C.



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Censored by:
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B.T.C. - A.P.O. 525

To Postmaster, N.Y.C.

May 18, 1943 (I think!)

Hello Folks,-

Do you mind some more thin paper? - you do? - Well, that's O.K. - but if you want something else, I'll have to stop - and you wouldn't want that now, would you? - or would you? - Maybe I'd best not ask those kinds of questions!

Well, - here I am - same place, - still waiting for the plane expecting every day to get a call so we can go back to our supposedly home base (for the time being, that is) tho - we aren't looking forward to it with any degree of zest. - We spent a short while there and have a pretty good idea of what we are missing. - But of real concern, and enough so that it makes us have the urge - is the thought that maybe we will have some mail awaiting there for us - 'cause we aren't - B.T.C. now. It will seem pretty good when we do get some 'cause most of us haven't seen mail for about 7 weeks - It's not quite so bad in my case, tho, for thanks to Paul - it's only been about 4 weeks for me - but that is gone by - - - it doesn't serve to make me any the less "eager" now! We try not think of it much - 'cause - - well - such thoughts don't go to make you any happier - if you get what I mean. -

Ha, - you should see me - just had a hot shower and all diked out in my new summer khaki uniform. - The shower - even if it is in salt water - makes you feel better - and we take one every day - 'cause not only is it the first place we could get hot showers - but the first place we could get showers for quite awhile - Each one we take, we think is our last one before we will get back to B.T.C. so we make hay while we can. - The khaki uniform you heard

about in my last letter - or at least about the shirts that I took to the tailors. - Know you will be interested in the outcome of it - I got the shirts back - and they were just as I wanted -! - What do you think of that? - Guess I'll settle down to be a minister of Foreign Affairs or something when I get home? - If I were as lucky every time as this one - I'd sure do okie doke!

'Bout time for me to go eat supper and get a quinine tablet, or two! - Part of my daily deed, now. - Our mosquitos over here are big enough so that they ought to give us shots for hydrophobia instead of for malaria - but I don't say anything about it to the "medics" - no use hurting their feelings when they try so hard!

Next morning - - - -

I never did get back around to this letter after supper - that is, before dark - and as our lights are supplied by a candle - well, I just couldn't work up any enthusiasm for it - besides I got involved! First off, I met one of the enlisted men on our crew who had several letters he wanted me to censor - then after that - we settled down and had a gab session - with me learning more than he! - (Whenever you want to find out anything - even rumors, the enlisted man's grapevine works better than the officer's!) After that, John Freeman came in, so damn if we didn't get involved in one of our usual conversations - and that lasted until what we usually term bed-time (10:00 P.M.). You should be around to hear some of these discourses about anything + everything!

About bedtime we crawled up on the roof for a bit of fresh air - It was a lovely night - the moon was full - a cloudless sky - and you could get quite a view in spite of ~~the~~ its being night. - I remember we both made some sort of remarks about it being a lovely night for an air-raid! - Well - sure enough - ~~to~~ we hadn't returned to our rooms five minutes when I heard "ack-ack"! I yelled for John - and he for me, and we both ran out to see what was going on. - Over towards town was a terrific bombardment going skywards - (our airport here, as back in the states, is located a short distance out of town) - Well, you could make out they were

bombing a certain section of the town, so we just boldly stood out and watched. - You'll probably think this sounds awfully queer, but when you could put aside just what it was all for - and just absorb what you actually saw - well - it was pretty! - Honestly - from our point of view, in the distance - it was a show to rival that in the monument grounds on the 4th of July! - Close by you could see the nearer guns fire, follow their bullets & shells upwards (there are "tracers" mixed in, and of course, you can only see the "tracers") until they would explode or die out; - in the distance you would see the city outlined before you by a bright flash - then in several seconds you'd hear the deep-throated "crunch" or "thump" as the bomb went off. - This lasted about 15 or 30 minutes, I guess, - then all was quiet again. - Anyway - then you have a first hand account of my first air raid. - I don't know what damage was done. - Lots could have been, of course - but personally I don't think much was - you could see no trace of any fires or anything. - It looked like they (the Axis) were just taking a few last punches at us in Africa to let us know they could still reach us!

You should hear & see some of the stories & things cropping out of this war - tho I guess the newspapers are full of 'em back there! - I ran into one of my classmates who flies a transport ship to and from the, what used to be, the war front, and ~~he has plenty of~~ carrying wounded men, - and he has plenty of ~~take~~ takes. - I've seen some of the prisoners myself, even some of the captured generals, and from talking to them, you can't conceive of a propaganda machine like Hitler has. - Some of the takes: - One prisoner was confident that the war would be over in a year with Hitler victorious! Another said, "well, the battle of Tunisia was only a small skirmish and ~~that~~ the Allies will never take 'x' from us." - The ironical part of that statement is that not only have we taken 'x', it was the first place we took when we invaded Africa last year! - You figure it out. Another prisoner, upon being told he might be shipped to New York (to see his reactions) - asked - "How can they ship us there - they have no docks to land at - we ~~the Germans~~ bombed those to pieces!"

I drew my rations for the week yesterday. - Each man is allowed so much candy and tobacco a week. He can go into the PX at any time and ~~buy~~ anything else they happen to have and we want it. - but theoretically once we draw our candy, - that's that. - The amount or kind you get depends on how much of a stock is on hand, and of course, varies with the post. - Yesterday, for example - I drew 1 Oh Henry, - 2 Tootsy Rolls, 1 roll of life savers, and a couple of packages of gum! - Last we were allowed only about $\frac{1}{2}$ that with some sort of gum drops instead of Oh Henrys. - In fact the candy last night was the first chocolate candy I've had since I left South America. - You should have seen me - I came back - moved everything off my bunk (still iron slats) and relaxed thoroughly while consuming the candy. - In the meanwhile I had warned everyone that the first one who even started near me would be met by a shoe, and considering my shoes - that was quite a threat!

Did I say that was the first chocolate I'd had? I meant real honest to goodness chocolate candy. - I've had several bars of what we call "D" ration - chocolate with vitamins + stuff. - These we get out of our stock of "bail out rations". - Also we eat "K" rations once in awhile. - of course this is for consumption in the plane + stuff - but after some of our meals! and then, too, - bed time snacks - we - well - just attack our "K rations". - These last are very nice - They come in a sealed box which contains a small can of Spam meat or cheese, 2 small packages of vitaminized crackers that look + taste like dog biscuits, - a bar of choc. or a fig bar - 1 piece of chewing gum, - some sugar, and either a prepared powder for lemonade or coffee! - A very tasty meal! - Better than the "C rations" of meat stew the "foot army" gets!

You'd get a laugh out of the way some of us, upon occasions, let our minds wander - Someone will say, "gee a coke would taste good." or "what would you give for a bottle of milk?". All sorts of things. The other day 3 other fellows + I got a ride on a truck with a couple of Naval officers. One of us ~~there~~ looked down + saw they had three cases of cokes with them off of a ship - so we began to

tease them about how lucky the Navy was! - Well, - as we knew - they broke down & offered us a coke. - The four of us divided the one coke - so you can imagine how much each got. - but you should have heard us rave -! - It was the first one in almost 2 months!

& It's not near as bad as it sounds - we are all fixed fairly well. - when you really consider the job. It's just these little pleasures of the States are like the little comforts of home when you first leave. - We all joke about it and have a good time. Everyone has an un-
 quenchable spirit, it seems, and at times - to Britishers - it must look like we are crazy. - The other night for instance, - I went to the show here on the post - free for everyone over here. All the pictures are old - but no one seems to mind that. This particular show, "I'm Pan Alby" touched in part, on the first world war. And in one scene where it showed everyone running around when Armistice was signed - to anyone watching the audience - he would have thought it had just been signed for this war! - All the soldiers were yelling, stamping their feet, whistling - doing everything as tho it affected them! - As soon as the next scene showed, tho. - they quieted down as they were before. You just never know what's going to happen next.

Golly day, - I sure have rambled for a long time. - Guess you're sure getting tired - and I know I'm running down! - Anyway, it's about time for me to go into town and see what's cooking. - So, with your permission, of course - I'll (to quote an appropriate phrase from Miss G.B.) hang my ~~co~~ to close on this line!

Lots & lots of Love,
 Frank